

Department of  
**Social Development Professions**

*Newsletter 2022 2nd Semester Issue*

**The vision of the  
Department of Social  
Development Professions**

To be a vibrant, authentic, engaged department; recognised for the training and development of well-rounded, contextually relevant social development practitioners; responsive to the diverse needs and who can facilitate meaningful change and enhance well-being of people.

**The mission of the Department of Social  
Development Professions**

To engage in student-centred teaching and generate indigenous knowledge through research that is responsive to community needs; informs social work practice; underpinned by theories of social work, social and human sciences within a social development paradigm.





*Dear students, colleagues and practice partners,*

I greet you with warm appreciation for walking the extensive mile with us in a year, that felt like four years in one. Many of us entered 2022 with positive expectation that we were returning to some form of normality after surviving the brutal consequences of the covid pandemic in 2020 and 2021. We soon realised that the world of work, higher education and life in general acquired a 6th gear, demanding us to move at the speed of lightning; balance multiple responsibilities simultaneously and doing more with less.

It remained vital for us to PAUSE, observe, reflect, learn and REPEAT. As we bid our fourth yrs farewell, I urge you to take these vital skills on your journey, along with the graduate attributes that we have been privileged to co-develop with you. Our 2nd and 3rd yrs reflect on how much it meant for them to return to doing their Work integrated learning in schools and at Social Development; several NGO and CBO partners respectively. We are grateful to our practice partners for the ongoing investment in the development of the type of social work professional that our communities needs and deserve. As a Department we strive to partner with organisations and schools where our students' resourcefulness and servant leadership can be fully optimised to the benefit of the clients served by the agencies. Each of our academic year levels had F2F lectures for several of their modules in the past year and we therefore have a smaller terrain to cover in respect of adjusting to the full return to F2F lectures in 2023. Our students have been notified earlier in the semester that they need to secure accommodation in Gqeberha for 2023 since most of our modules will be offered on the F2F platform. We will however draw on the benefits of the blended approach to learning and therefore invite all students, staff and practice partners to read their mails regularly, follow our Facebook page to ensure you have the latest communication.

The newsletter is a reflection of our highlights in the past six months of 2022. A huge thank you to our Public relations and marketing Intern, Boitumelo Matla who compiled the newsletter for us. You added great value at so many levels in the academic programme with your quiet presence and impeccable work ethic.

Lastly, we welcome your feedback and invite you to continue to hold us accountable to live the values and mission of our Department and university. On behalf of the Department, I wish you a peaceful and meaningful time of restoration and reconnection.

*Prof Veonna Goliath*  
Head of Department



## SDP Book Launch

We are excited and delighted to announce the first textbook edited and written mainly by Nelson Mandela University Social Work lectures. The authors of the book come from 8 different South African Universities. Our lecturers who are part of the authors' in the book are Dr Zurina Abdulla, Dr Razia Lagardien, Mrs Zukiswa Gwam, Prof Veonna Goliath, Prof Anneline Keet, Dr Nevashnee Perumal and Mr Vuyo Diko.

### About the book:

Critical Social Work: Prospects and Challenges is a convergence of 18 critical Black African minds from various South African universities, who challenge the hegemonic status quo in society. In this collection of conceptual and empirical papers, each author tells a compelling story with common themes that are firmly rooted in advancing decolonial knowledge.

This book covers pertinent issues in social work practice and education ranging from rethinking parenting roles, utopian notions of family, mediation practice in relation to unmarried fathers to race and landlessness. The book contains practical suggestions in respect of decolonising the self as well as social work curricula in higher education. In addition, Critical Social Work: Prospects and Challenges delves into trusting relationships as cornerstones to effective supervision, centring African spirituality in social work, economic emancipation of Black women, cultural trauma as well as drug abuse prevention.

Based on the range of themes, this book would benefit social work practitioners, students, academics, social activists and anyone who is curious to understand how decoloniality may be operationalised in social work.



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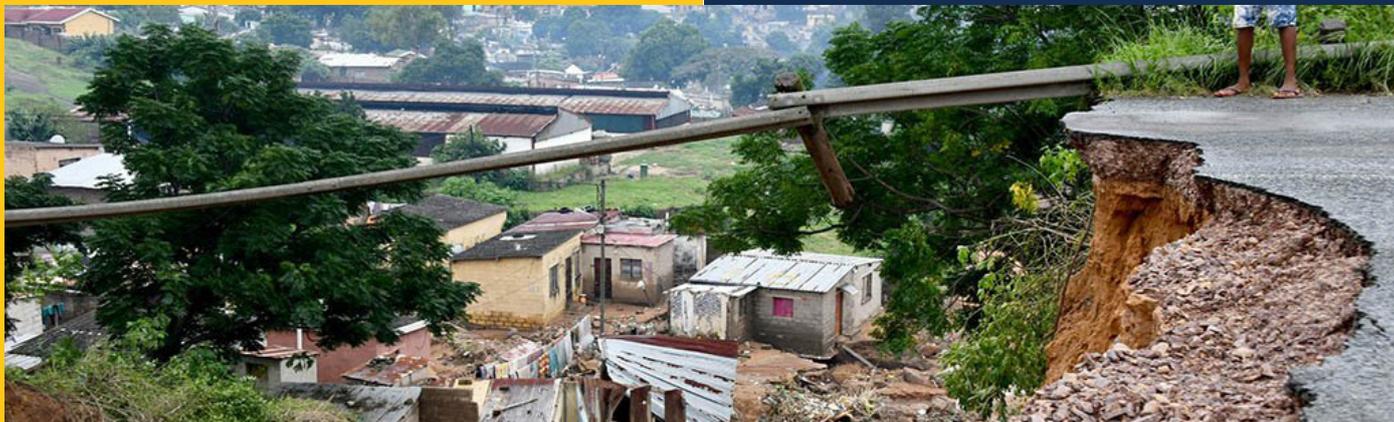
Dr Zurina Abdulla's election

### **Academic Year 2023**

## Staff Achievements

### ASASWEI Colloquium

The South African Association of Schools of Social Work, (ASASWEI), in collaboration with the Discipline of Social Work at the University of KwaZulu Natal, held their biennial colloquium on 28 and 29th of September, using the Nelson Mandela Faculty of Health Sciences online platform.



The event, titled; Social Work Relevance during times of Climate Change and Disasters: #KZN-FLOODS was designed to respond to the heavy flooding, large scale destruction, loss of lives and human suffering across KwaZulu-Natal, interrogating the social work role in climate change.

People who experience socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities as part of their daily lives are especially hard hit during disastrous events and they find it difficult to rebuild their lives without extensive external support. Social work academics, practitioners and community members who were involved as victims and as frontline professionals during the KZN floods and other environmental calamities in recent times shared valuable learnings

and new academic pathways during this event. Centering the focus on climate change and disasters, the main themes for the colloquium were:

- a) Trauma management,
- b) Community development interventions and disaster management,
- c) Reimagining the social work role,
- d) Future curriculum implications.

This well-attended colloquium brought together educators, practitioners, students and community members, interrogating the role that social work should play to minimise vulnerability to for socio-economically marginalised communities during times of man-made or natural disasters.



Contribution: Prof Anneline Keet



## Staff Achievements

### Conferences to address childhood trauma and mediation

**D**r Lagardien attended the 13th Annual Child Trauma Conference in Cape Town on 5th & 6th October. The Conference was organized by Jelly Beanz, an NPO that gives HOPE to children affected by trauma and abuse. It was a packed 2 days of high-quality presentations. The conference was relevant to the South African context of child abuse and provided innovative solutions to working with trauma and abuse in children through a variety of topics. These included topics such as: Creating circles of care in communities through child and youth care work; Child Sexual Violence and Trauma: towards a Decolonised African-centered Child-centric Psychological Interventions; The intersection between children's harmful sexual behaviours and their use of pornography; Creatively Leveraging Non-Human Therapists: Therapy Dogs in a Court Preparation Programme for Abused Children and Gauging progress and setting an agenda for child and adolescent mental health: Findings from the South African Child

Gauge 2021/22. The presenters of the conference included professionals and experts from diverse backgrounds such as psychologist, play therapist, social workers, researchers, lecturers amongst others. The Meditation Conference by the Social Justice Association of Mediators took place on the 18-19 November 2022. The conference theme was: "New Developments in Family Mediation". Included in the conference presentation were some innovative topics and areas in family mediation such as: Online dispute resolution; Coparenting APP for mediators and parents; Draft Family Dispute Resolution Bill; Parenting Coordination, challenges, and new developments; Dialogue in broken relationships.

## African Knowledge Production Incubators Project

**T**he African Knowledge Production incubators is an NRF funded project which is in its second year of funding. The team consists of six academics from 5 South African universities. This year our major project activities centred around preparing a manuscript on the work we have done during our incubation in 2021. Priscalia Khosa and Motlapule Nathane were keen to travel to York in the UK to attend a decolonial conference hosted by Ventana, UK from 4-7 October. Unfortunately, this was rendered impossible due to

the cost and visa delays. We quickly decided to all convene in Gqeberha and join the conference online. We hosted an imbizo at this conference where we presented our project and engaged the audience in critical self reflection within their contexts. The engagement was thought provoking and well received. Our main takeaway from this was the relationships we developed with colleagues such as Adriana Moreno Cely from Belgium who researches and promotes humble togetherness. This tenets of this lie alongside those of Ubu-

tu philosophy. We launched the extended incubators within four our departments in the different institutions. Here, we presented our project with the intention of inviting our colleagues to join the conversations on indigenizing the curriculum, africanising practice and challenging own thinking. There is some work that must still be done for all departments to realise the prospective benefits of this project although in some departments the project and participation was well received.



From L-R: Prof Veonna Goliath (NMU), Dr Motlalepule Nathane (WITS), Dr Priscalia Khosa (SU), Dr Mbongeni Sithole (UKZN), Prof Thanduxolo Nomngcoyiya (UFH), Dr Nevashnee Perumal (NMU)

Our logo was developed this year from the main themes that dominated our incubations – the logo depicts togetherness surrounded by earth and water and a fire that burns within to indigenize knowledge in social work. And we would like to share our experiences with you so you may share similarly. Hence we invite you to ask us about the African Knowledge Production Incubators. Finally we are collaborating with India to visit from 22-28 January 2023 to exchange knowledge on indigenizing the social work curriculum. We will be visiting 3 universities in the South of India. They range from state to rural universities. The team is looking forward to this spirit and soul filled journey we will make.

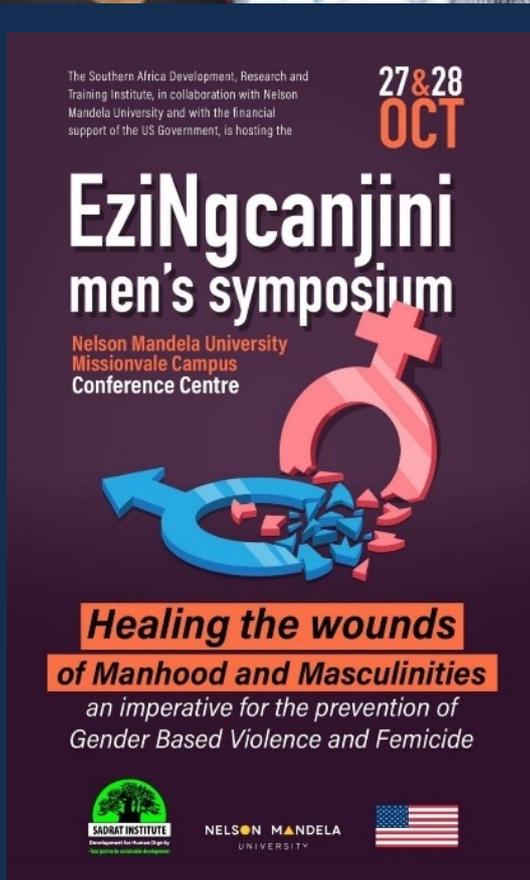


The sub team who visited UKZN



At the Ventana conference in Gqeberha





## Healing the wounds of Manhood and Masculinities: an imperative for the prevention of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF)

*SDP hosted a HYBRID GBV symposium along with NPO partner, SADRAT at the Missionvale conference centre over two days in October 2022.*

The title of the symposium was: EziNgcanjini Symposium 2022: Healing the wounds of Manhood and Masculinities: an imperative for the prevention of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF)". The take home message from this symposium was that we all need to be deliberate in bringing about sustainable change and to avoid joining fly by night interventions which becomes a secondary social injustice. Violence is a language and unless we become reflective about our own

ity in reinforcing violence, we will not change the cycle. One of the keynote speakers, Lesley Thomas (3rd from the left in the picture above, wearing the cap) went on a journey from serving a prison term for armed robbery, to becoming a social justice advocate – a dedicated community worker, who demonstrated the importance of men connecting to their vulnerability, as the first step to transformation. Lesley suggests that asking the question: "what do I learn from people I disagree with", allow us to engage in a process of sense-making, from which we can emerge with wisdom and grace - Luvuyo Diko, a contract staff member in our department spoke about the different levels of prevention and how critical it is to have targeted interventions as opposed to awareness raising, in a context where people have already been affected by GBV and toxic masculinity. The Helenvale poets (Luciano and Charne Williams) from the Bay creative writing, rendered powerful poetry that emphasize the value of the transformative power of peace.

Dr Chandre Gould from the Institute for Security Studies asserted that community members are the knowledge and experience holders with whom we need to collaborate, rather than professionals imposing our knowledge onto community.

*This is a space where male students are invited to “break the man cage”; where they search for healthier versions of being human...*

The importance of sitting in circles, with no laptops and tables between us and the clients, assist in removing the hierarchy of privilege. Dan Danisa from the Transformation unit at NMU, explained the principles on which the Singamadoda group on campus function. This is a space where male students are invited to “break the man cage”; where they search for healthier versions of being human, by sharing their fears, hopes and vulnerability; and unlearn the toxic masculine scripts acquired through socialization.

## Engagement News

### The Hope Revolution

The Hope Revolution Vision Programme was launched around the theme; Creating cycles of hope: turning bread into seed through carefronting and community-based substance abuse approach in Nelson Mandela Bay, Gqeberha, at Mandela University Missionvale Campus on 24 August 2022. This came about through a collective partnership between Nelson Mandela University, Ebenezer Church, and The Hope Revolution Vision Organisation. Additionally, the launch operationalised the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Nelson Mandela University and The Hope Revolution Vision Organisation.

A diverse representation of stakeholders attended the launch, such as the community schools’ principles, local government officials, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, non-government organisations and Mandela University staff and students. This launch served as an initial conversation amongst the stakeholders in Gqeberha to address the challenges of substance abuse in the Eastern Cape Province at large.





The collaborative role of the Dept of Social Development Professions is to assist with the coordinating of the stakeholders for the training to take place and then assist with the launching of its application in the communities where our students are doing their practical work.

Our Dept signed an MoU with Indlela Mental Health & TerreDeHomes (German funder), aimed at evaluating a model that the Mental Health staff developed to prepare young people with intellectual disabilities for the open labour market. The systematic literature review of existing models was completed by Dr Ozius Dweba; and Prof Goliath and social work graduate Siwa Mbebe are working on interviewing various stakeholders about existing policies and mandates around the matter.

A Phd and Masters student will do their PG studies on the project.

## Engagement News

### SDP Engagement Journey with Partners

Our Department is engaged in a number of community engagement initiatives, one of the most important ones being, engaging in a process where we can foster more authentic relationships and more realistic collaborations with our partners.

We are at the stage of reaching consensus about the nature of these partnerships following a long journey this year of getting to know each other better. The nature of the partnerships that have been co-constructed are as follows:

- Direct service needs requiring social work student placement
- Direct Needs related to other faculties/departments' focus
- Capacity building needs
- Resource & Funding needs/ sharing
- SLP/Curriculum/Programme development/ Input needs
- Awareness, Advocacy/Lobbying
- Research needs
- Coordination needs
- Marketing/Public relations needs

The consistent partners who journeyd with us in the past year and with whom we will continue to unpack the desired partnerships are Siyaya Skills training centre, Otto Du Plessis & Limekhaya High Schools; NGOs Ikhala Trust, Mfesane, East Cape Midland College.



# Engagement News

## Wheelchair Project

Mandela Uni's Transformation Office and our Department collaborated with the Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities in the city on this Wheelchair Wednesday campaign - creating awareness about people with disabilities and to raise funds for those who need wheelchairs and amputee support.

Wheelchair Wednesday welcomed participants to SPAR Algoa Foods in Algoa Park for a 67-minute wheelchair experience, where able-bodied people could spend 67 minutes in a wheelchair attempting various tasks that "blind" and disabled persons cannot do.

"The Wheelchair Wednesday initiative was a life-changing experience having to participate in this event, I could see how challenging it is for people with disabilities", said Geniene Sharrock from the University's Transformation Office. Geniene represented the University together with fourth-year Social Work Onele Mzilikzi.

Far left in the picture, Geniene Sharrock in the wheelchair and Onele Mzilikzi behind her.

Geniene said she feels privileged and humbled at the same time to have been actively involved and representing Nelson Mandela University.

Geniene and Onele said that they were excited to see people's willingness to support this event, and they were welcomed warmly to mix with some inspiring people. Looking at people in wheelchairs gave them a new perspective on not taking their lives and health for granted.



# Engagement News

## Staff Wellness Wednesdays

The SDP staff gets together biweekly for a Staff Wellness Day.

On these days, staff rotate and take turns to facilitate these sessions. The sessions are all about staff getting together outside of the office and doing an activity to bring about staff unity, cohesion and conscious wellness enhancement.



## Learning and Teaching

### Pedagogy of Care

**D**r Lagardien attend Pedagogy of Care Conference which was arranged by the faculty of Education.

A pedagogy of care is a pedagogical perspective, an approach to teaching based on an ethical care as both amoral imperative and pedagogical necessity.

The purpose of the conference is to improve the students' first year transition experience, the NMU's faculty of Education implemented the pedagogy of care (PoC), where the major barrier to success in the students' first year were identified and mitigated.



## Teaching Development and Collaboration

**W**e are excited to share a new development in our 3rd year module: Statutory Intervention and Child Protection. We have collaborated with an expert in the field of child protection and statutory intervention, Ms Sanet Viljoen who is a social worker in private practice. Together and with the support of the LXD lab we have developed a video for our students on the Child protection and the statutory intervention process. With the video comes slides which depict a step by step process that is easy for students to understand and guides implementation in practice for the removal of children. This is a resource that we intend sharing with our graduates in the field.

## From the Students

### Practical Experience



#### *Keown Hess, 2nd Year*

For me I'd say that practicum was good. It was a fun and educational experience whereby we had the chance to apply our knowledge that we were taught to real life cases. I was sceptical and very nervous for prac, as I felt that we needed a much more in-depth preparation or our schools did, but when having interacted with the learners in the manner we learned in our skills module in first semester, I started to enjoy it because I applied the theory as to how to ask questions, how to sit, and the manner in which I asked. Prac was not just a way to experience the ways of being able to interview people, evaluate them to determine the underlying issue and provide them with assistance, but it was also a way of being able to see how efficient one works in a group and how successful and beneficial groups can be. Practicum for me made me want to be engaged more in being a social worker as I get to see how the client's well-being improves when opening up to someone especially when they have no one to talk to. It had changed me as a person to adapt the non-judgemental and empathetic attributes that one needs in this course. I only wish prac could have been longer.

#### *Matamela Lidovho, 2nd Year*

Well, it was pretty much fruitful. Though a rough start in terms of concern with safety and language barrier. In the end, I was well accommodated which made it easier for me to settle in and work effectively and as well as gain exposure to to what is like for those doing the profession.



## From the Students

### Practical Experience

#### *Amahle Gqqa, 3rd Year*

My practicum experience has given me a few lessons that I plan to apply in my future work. My most important revelation was that community people have incredible intuition when it comes to determining whether a counsellor is invested in dialogue and cares about the client's well-being. I learned a lot about professionalism, goal planning, and what to do in various work-related circumstances. I believe that going through the practicum experience helped me gain confidence in the work I do. This will also help me in the future because I will be prepared for what is anticipated in the workplace.



#### *Msizi Zitha, 3rd Year*

My experience about social work is that social workers advocate for the vulnerable and support the mental health of the people living in the community they work in. I learned that social workers make a positive impact by enhancing the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities they work in.

Social workers help people meet their basic needs and services such as mental health care, support system etc. I learned that the day-to-day responsibilities of social workers vary widely for example some days social workers come across the duty to meet with families through home visits to increasing parenting knowledge, parent child interaction and involvement, and checking if the environment they are living in is safe and conducive for a child to function effectively. I learned that social workers inspired to work with children can apply to positions in schools. The most significant thing I learned about social workers in child welfare is that social workers can play a fundamental role in making vulnerable children feel a greater sense of safety.

They build this sense of safety and security to encourage vulnerable children to build healthy relationships and connections with peers and adults. Social workers also can model healthy adult relationships for these children and be an ongoing source of support. I learned that the responsibility of a social worker is to protect children in situations of neglect, abuse, or maltreatment.

## From the Students

### Practical Experience

#### *Nikita Gelandt, 4th Year*

For my final year of practicum, I was placed at Livingstone Tertiary Hospital. I've always wanted to work in the hospital setting so I was very excited. Working in a government funded hospital opened my eyes to so many social issues and how I can make a difference as a social worker. I've gained knowledge and experience that not only contributes to my growth as a professional, but as a person as well. As with any journey, there were some challenges but overall, my practicum experience was positive and fruitful. I believe that Nelson Mandela University should continue the relationship with the hospital as I can confidently say that it has a positive impact on how a social work student will conduct oneself during practice.



#### *Ntsheng Dini, 4th Year*



Practicum was great. I was placed in an organization that I believe has shaped me as a social worker. I have learnt to adapt in a way that the profession has never allowed me before with doing everything online and simulated interviews. Practicum was very fulfilling when I was practicing, I felt like I was doing something. The working relationships I had were enough to cover the lack of support I received from the department.

I believe supervisors are there to guide us and to support us through a new and unfamiliar journey we were to take. We were going in a new journey that had us dealing with lives of people, real lives we needed every piece of guidance we could

get but this year I received none at all. I felt alone to a point I do not know how many breakdowns I had this year from this module. My supervisor gave me no time of day. Whenever I needed guidance with my assessments I had to wonder around and collect pieces of information from my classmates, the lack of attention from her was gut wrenching as well. I struggled more than I have ever struggled in my years of study. Even now I had to turn in a POE that was not marked because my supervisor did not care to look at my work.

I hope 2023 students do not go through what I had to endure regardless of the many times I brought this information to the Practicum coordinator. I know this was not only my experience but of many but because we were afraid that our lives are in her hands with regards to marking we had to cave in act like everything was okay.

I hope next year the department gives a thought to who can handle the work of being a supervisor, to look at the amount of work one has to do before giving them the position.

Other than that I believe this whole situation has made me a stronger being because I pushed on and I have learnt a lot. Thank you.

## Staff News



We are delighted to announce that Ms Ziphonke Moyikwa was appointed in the permanent position as Departmental secretary. Zipho (as she is affectionately known) started her journey in our Department as Public Relations Intern in May 2018 and has been invaluable mainstay to the SDP student and staff team. Her beautiful heart and strong work ethic is a perfect culture fit for the Department. We wish her a long and happy stay in the Department.

We are sad about losing Ms Nozipho Hokonya who was a contract lecturer; student supervisor and Faculty Mentoring coordinator, to the LT Colab unit, but share in her joy at the permanent appointment. Thank you Ms Hokonya for your dedication to the students and the work at large. We will miss you in the Dept and Faculty, but happy that you are within close reach as member of the Mandela University family.



## SACSSP News



Dr Zurina Abdulla was elected to the South African Council Social Service Professions Professional Board for social Work – this was a Ministerial Appointment and she is appointed as Higher Education Institution representative. We know that this mover and shaker colleague of ours will contribute to transformative change at the SACSSP.

**NOTE** The SACSSP registration for new students and social workers are now online, visit: (<https://www.sacssp.co.za/registration/>) to register. Students are encouraged to please check the Council site to check whether their student registrations have been confirmed. NO STUDENT may do practicum without being duly registered. All Social work full time, contract staff and prac partners are reminded to maintain their registrations and adhere to the requirements in respect of CPD points.

# Academic Year 2023

## A message from the Social Work Society Chairperson, Aashiqah Ford

As the newly elected Society, we want to prepare and equip the students of NMU to be proactive and effective in the corporate world and to fulfil their role as a social worker in their respective societies.

We intend to do this through social change, development and the empowerment and liberation of students for the challenges they may face within their occupation.

We intend to achieve the above through active engagement, interaction and collaboration with other stakeholders. This means that each member of the society will be exposed and have the opportunity to partake in the above interventions in order to ensure they are fully equipped and trained to fulfill their roles as a social worker in a sustainable manner.

My message is firstly addressed to myself and then to you, We will be faced with enormous challenges in our societies and the corporate environment in which we operate. It will be easier to deal with some of these challenges through methods that we have researched and were successfully implemented by others before us. However the more difficult ones will be those interventions and practices which had not been successful in the past, and those that will rely on our new training methods and research. It is because of the above that it will be require of us to be very diligent and resourceful in the application of the interventions that we have learnt and researched. We have to be resilient and determined to achieve successful outcomes which will benefit not only us and our society but the entire social work field at large.

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**NOTE** All our undergraduate social work modules will be presented FACE to FACE on SOUTH CAMPUS. The timetable will be finalised shortly. Students are advised to apply for accessible student accommodation to ensure close proximity to SOUTH CAMPUS.

### *Save the Date*

We will have a Mandela University Social Work Student and Staff Braai on Friday, 25 February 2023 On South Campus. Come meet your fellow Social work students and staff and make sure we form closer bonds. Through Unity and Solidarity we can collectively live up to our Departmental vision.





*in service to  
society*